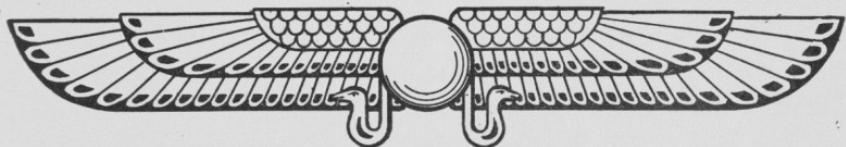


'Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.'



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

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BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE T. S.

[Read before the Chicago Branch, T. S., on the Anniversary of the founding, of the Theosophical Society.]

AS MOST young people, however insignificant, have a subtle conviction that the year of their birth was an epoch in the history of the nation, so most young Societies are inwardly sure that their natal year marks a new era in the course of the world. The Theosophical Society is not only inwardly sure but outwardly assertive to this effect, and, very naturally, onlookers shrug their shoulders and believe that they shrewdly detect the familiar spirit of exaggerated importance and serene complacency.

And yet it may very well be that the 17th of November, 1875, had a significance which the age has not even suspected, and which Theosophists themselves very dimly perceive. Waive the questions whether the foundation of the Theosophical Society was actually prompted by the Masters,—though many of us so believe; whether H. P. B. was herself an Initiate, and knew what she did when she made Col. Olcott her friend and collected around her the material to be in readiness for the hour of association,—though many of us so hold; whether the establishment of the T. S. was the particular contribution to that spiritual movement which, we are taught, is put forth in the last quarter of each century,—though many of us are so persuaded: still there remain the unquestionable facts that in twenty years Western thought has been suffused

with Theosophical ideas, Western intelligence has been examining with interest the Cosmogony and Anthropology of the Theosophical scheme, Western religiousness has found fresh ideals and new motives in the expositions of the Wisdom Religion, and that all this has been effected by those who formed the Theosophical Society, labored for it with unwearied eagerness as the agency for these just ends, and insisted that they did so as instruments of those Higher Powers who foresaw results as well as instigated methods. It is impossible to deny that the name and terms and teachings and explanations of Theosophy have spread in most astonishing degree through the literature of the time, and that the impression they make on contemporary thought is increasingly deep; or that the writers and workers who effected this did so as Theosophists and in avowed pursuance of the purpose of the Theosophical Society.

The birth of the Theosophical Society, if we regard merely the Society's existing influence upon scientific, literary, and religious thought, was an important event. It was far more so if we regard that future influence which all indications predict as certain. But there is still another view of it, a very interesting one—the view of it as an illustration of the great law of Evolution now universally accepted as presiding over all organic life. There are various points as to which the illustration holds. Every birth of an organism implies a long preceding course and network of preparatory influences; and we know that prior to the Society's advent there had been a condition of things in scientific thought, social affairs, and religious unsettling which almost exacted the provision of some such means whereby there should be opened to science the regions without which its knowledge could only be partial and misleading, whereby social, national, and international life could receive the only cure for its selfishness and continuous disintegration; whereby religion should receive new invigoration, its vital truths be re-affirmed, its sanctions re-justified, its hopes re-inspired * * * Every birth of an organism is in smallness and feebleness; and we know that the Society was formed of few members, only one eminent and none others distinguished, its resources petty, its health doubtful, its prospects problematical, its arrival sensationless * * * Every birth of an organism finds

the sphere of its existence already to some extent pre-occupied, and a competition with similar organisms inevitable; and we know that the Society did not enter a world destitute of Societies with similar aims, but had both to justify its appearance and ensure its success by later argument and effort.

The point, however, which I have in mind is quite different. It is that developmental change which, in accordance with the law of Evolution, the Society, like all other organisms, has undergone. Nor do I mean size. An adult is certainly a very different being in magnitude and strength from a new-born babe, and the Society has become so in these particulars. But look at this. A new-born babe is distinguishable as to race, and more or less so as to nationality. Its color, features, structure of head, degree of vitality, foretell in some measure its future. But no observer can read its temperament, degree of intellectuality, or moral nature, much less the changes which will successively occur in its character, or the career which it is destined to accomplish. And it is a most striking fact in the history of the Theosophical Society, one to which too little attention has been directed, that it has passed through several most distinct stages of evolution, each an advance upon its predecessor, each revealing more of its real nature and purpose, each molding it more into the shape which must have been had in view by the unseen influences which first prompted its formation, and ever afterwards watched over and protected it. These stages could not have been foreseen at the birth of the Society.

The Society was started avowedly with the purpose of closer investigation of psychic phenomena. Several of the original members were strong spiritualists, and one of its early doings was the contracting for a lecture from a person who professed ability to materialize elementals. But the era of phenomenalism was brief and fruitless. Then there came an era of philosophic exposition. It was subdivided into several sections. First was preparation. H. P. B. wrote articles for the press, and paved the way for later and fuller teaching by *Isis Unveiled*, a work singularly adapted to its mission as pioneer. It cleared the ground of much misconception, disclosed the inner oneness of the world's religions, and gave hints of further and actual revelation which were enough to stimulate interest and foster hope. The second

was the revelation itself. The Founders went to India; fuller relations with Masters secured teaching which, as embodied in Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, poured through the Western Hemisphere a flood of new light upon the gravest problems in life and study, and magazines were established to instruct members of the rapidly growing Society, and to furnish the public with additional facts from the Esoteric Philosophy. Then there came an era of philanthropic effort. All through the second era had been an increasing manifestation of two truths,—that the Society was a unique, and the only rational step towards a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood, and that spiritual uplifting, the highest aim of man, could only be surely and systematically achieved in conformity with knowledge of man's actual composition, and of the laws of the spiritual world. Now, if universal peace and universal progress on the highest lines are the supremest boons to humanity, and if they only become possible as their grounds and methods are known, the greatest service one can render the world is to give the utmost diffusion to such priceless facts. Thus the third era became ever more and more conspicuously one of earnest effort for widespread human good, an era of zealous propagation of Theosophy in articles and circulars and pamphlets, of the use of the press and lectures and missioner of Branch activities and individual toil. This is the era in which we are living now.

In this progress from era to era, each a progressive and healthful evolution from the one before it, we are struck with two facts. One is the decline of phenomenalism as a pursuit. In the first era phenomenalism was the avowed object. Later on, H. P. B. used phenomena as illustrative of occult and unsuspected natural laws, and, to some extent, as evidence of her own occult status. They thus arrested the attention of the reading world. Having served their purpose they were dropped. Still later, they ceased to be the subject of emphasis by Theosophic writers, and were gradually discredited as matters for effort or even desire. Phenomenalism has died out of the Theosophical Society as such.

The other fact is the change in the kind of members joining the Society. As Theosophic expositions of the post-mortem state made havoc of Spiritualistic notions as to visitors from the

"summer land," Spiritualists revolted from the Society, bitterly antagonized it, and thus rescued it from the suspicions of students who were ripe for it, but had no wish to be identified with mediums and séances and an aroma of credulity. The serious-minded began to come in, men and women holding intelligent views of life and wishing them supplemented by the larger facts of an evidently rational philosophy, devout souls sensing the helps and hopes and consolations and stimuli of a rich religionism, philanthropic minds eager to serve humanity, and do something of real value to an age sorely needing it. As marvel and strangeness declined, there was nothing to attract new members but the solid motives of learning or help, and few but the learners and helpers now enter.

Now all this evolution is in exact accordance with the Natural Law of Evolution in other departments. Everywhere the hidden type comes into view under influence from the hidden forces. The outer form gives but partial knowledge of the real entity. As the vital principle asserts itself, the inner nature gradually discloses its quality. Original peculiarities, not essential to the functions, much less to the existence of the organism, decay; the really distinctive ones make their full appearance. There may be little or no change of form other than results from growth, but there is vast change in spirit, aim, manifest purpose of existence, largeness of character, vigor of internal life, relation to environment. And the Theosophical Society's evolution from phenomenism through intellectualism to philanthropy follows the universal rule. Unsuspected by perhaps all save one who assisted at its birth, there were latent in the infant certain potentialities, powers, tendencies, which would surely have their outcome. Inherent vitality pushed these along to manifestation. Thus the great spiritual mission, not at all apparent, not at all indicated at first, ultimately became its most conspicuous feature. The doctrine of the unity of mankind rose to the surface from the within. Conversely, devotion to phenomena, originally the *raison d'être* of the Society, steadily withdrew, decayed, and disappeared. No great change in organization has occurred, except such as must result from larger size and growing needs, but the tone and animus and work and workings, the broadened aim, the richer life,

the strengthened purpose, the heightened aspiration, the more vigorous heart, lungs, hands, all are significant of far advance under the evolutionary law.

This aspect of the anniversary held to-day is a very cheering one to Theosophists who accept Evolution as the law of organic life. For if the Society, in spite of unpopularity, ridicule, weakness, external enmity, and—worse yet—internal dissension, has steadily unfolded the type contemplated for it by its unseen Founders, reaching in its present stage the very agency They had in view,—to wit, a band of students striving to propagate everywhere those great truths of Karma, Reincarnation, the Higher Self, and the like, through which humanity is to advance to the dwellings of the gods; if, I say, it has duly evolved to the very character intended for it, there is ample reason for confidence both that it has the inherent quality needful for continued life, and that the Higher Powers, who surely must be content with its record, will still accord to it Their benediction. These facts mean that it promises a larger and longer evolution, a fuller and richer mission, an increased and increasing protection. Evolution does not cease until its limits are reached, or until catastrophe blights the life. But who shall set limits to a work co-extensive with humanity and no less enduring; and what catastrophe shall bring death to a body which daily thrills with more vitality, daily exercises itself in the unselfish philanthropism which is the essence of all true vigor, daily receives support from Those to whom it owes its existence and in Whose service it is engaged?

True, it may suffer calamities; it has done so. At various epochs blows most cruel have fallen upon it. It has suffered from defection, even mutilation. Falsehood has defamed it, treason has staggered it, imposture has clouded it; but nothing has destroyed it. When it has seemed to totter, and its enemies have raised delighted shouts as the end apparently drew near, suddenly it has braced itself with new strength and begun afresh to scatter blessings over the world. Hardly has the foe felicitated himself on his success when he perceives that to have been a failure. Work proceeds, confidence returns, energy revives. The history of the past is the prophecy of the future. If the same conditions exist, the same devotion, the same faith, the same dutifulness, the same results will follow,—favor, rescue, health.

It is no small privilege to have been born in the latter half of the nineteenth century and to have become part of that body whose influence is so astonishingly molding the thought and guiding the aspiration of the time. Who can calculate, even surmise, the effect upon his own evolution of his identification with the Theosophical Society? He has come into it in its youth, shared its early struggles and drawbacks, been one of the few who loved and cherished it. No glory has accrued to him, no favor, no fame; rather misconception and a touch of scorn. He has, indeed, had more than compensation in his interior growth, and in the consciousness that his work for others has been far from vain. And yet it may be that his present perception, satisfying as it is, will prove but a hint of that glorious revelation which shall open to him when, in far-off incarnations and under the light of Initiation, he learns what was the Karma which made him a Theosophist and a member of the Theosophical Society, what the benefits which the Society diffused throughout humanity. Then shall appear the full significance of its work, his participation in it, his alliance with the Masters who formed and protected it. Whatever the records of other incarnations and other services, none can obscure the fact that in this nineteenth century he shared the weakness, the labors, the vicissitudes, and the fortunes of the Theosophical Society.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

THE RATIONALE OF HYPNOTISM AND MESMERISM.

[Continued from page 122]

THE Theosophical theory of Man sheds a ray of light upon the puzzling phenomena of Hypnotism and Mesmerism, as they are generally understood, for it shows that man is far more complex than the average scientist would admit; it shows that he has forms other than the physical, and that the physical body itself is but a vehicle to connect the real man with the material world, instead of *it* being the real man. Science tells us that this body is continually being modified, that streams of atoms (?) are constantly leaving and other atoms taking their place; so great is this change that in seven years from any given time every single

atom which then made up the physical body will have been changed. The form is a mansion "through which a moving crowd forever pass," it is a center of attraction where the atoms pause a moment before passing onward. I do not know how science accounts for the form being kept together so distinctly while this continual interchange is going on between the man and the world around him; there must be something which keeps the form together amid this change, and Theosophy postulates an ethereal form which persists from life to life. This form is the mould into which the molecules are built, or, to put it in another and I think a better way, this ethereal form is the centre of attraction for the molecules. This form, generally spoken of as the astral body, is the *real* body of the man, for in it the senses have their centres, which are not, as is usually supposed, in the physical form; the outer sense organs being but to collect and concentrate the vibrations from the physical world. Paracelsus says: "Man is possessed of an astral body. * * * As in sleep the elementary body rests, the sidereal continues its action, it has neither rest nor sleep; but when the elementary body predominates and overcomes, then rests the sidereal."

The astral senses—or rather, *the senses* when they do not have to work through molecular organs—are many times more powerful than those we miscall "physical," and, strange as it may appear to some, it is *by* our astral senses that we perceive at this moment. But some will say, "How can we perceive by our astral senses when you have just said they are many times more powerful than the physical ones?" I would answer that in previous cycles of evolution, the ethereal body has been moulded and made pliant as a vehicle of the *real* man—the "thinker," as Mrs. Besant calls him—and in this cycle the physical body is undergoing the same process. The thinker is endeavoring to make it translucent; but not being yet perfected, it cannot fully express the thinker as it is able to manifest in the ethereal form—it can vibrate only clumsily in response to it. Consequently, man's perceptions, when his consciousness is functioning through the body, are in proportion *not* to the power of the astral sense centres, but to the degree of perfection of the physical body, for it is through the outer sense organs that he is receiving impressions. So that,

supposing the astral senses are equal to fifty, and the physical organs equal to ten, the thinker, functioning by the astral senses through the physical, can only perceive what those physical organs are able to transmit—that is, up to ten; although if the physical body were removed he could perceive up to fifty. Is this borne out by fact? I think we shall soon see that it is.

Let us now examine the rationale of the two states. We will take the hypnotic first. The theory generally put forward and accepted by the hypnotists of to-day is that the state is produced by the fatigue or exhaustion of one or more nerve-centres, caused by a lengthened or very sudden stimulation of any of the sensory nerves. Now, what does this mean? It means (if words *do* mean anything) that a nerve is tired out until it can no longer transmit impressions, and thus the link between it and the mind is broken. But although Heidenhain advocates this theory, he found, when a person was hypnotized by staring at an object, that if another and different object were substituted the person *rapidly regained consciousness*. Again, if, say, the optic nerve is "fatigued" or "exhausted" (which is the usual process,) how is it that the subject can *see* the operator and automatically imitate his movements, as in catalepsy? It seems to me that "exhaustion" of a nerve would produce only natural sleep, and it is well known that subjects often fall into a natural sleep instead of the hypnotic. The theory I now give accounts for this.

To really understand how a person can be hypnotized, we must first know how we perceive, say, an object. The theory of sight usually accepted is that the rays of light are reflected from an object on to the retina of the eye and transmitted thence (via the optic nerve) to the brain, and that the mind perceives this *picture* of the object and not the object itself. But I think that the rays of light are only the vehicles upon which the mind travels. Let us make distinction here. The thinker has the mind as its vehicle, and the mind has the brain, etc., to connect it with the outer world. The process of perception is roughly as follows: The rays of light are reflected from an object on to the retina, this causes the optic nerve to vibrate in response and this vibration is transmitted to the visual centre of the brain. So far, so good; but from this alone no perception can result. Now, in a

normal person the mind is closely in interaction with the brain, and when the centre of sight is thrown into vibration, the vibrations stimulate the mind, which flows out to the object; the mind is plastic and takes the form of anything to which it is directed, and for the moment becomes "at-one" with it, and in proportion to this "at-one"-ness is our correct perception of the object. In other words, the mind flows round and through it and vibrates like it, thus creating a more or less (generally less) perfect image in its own—mind-substance, shall I call it? The nearer this image approaches the object, the clearer will be our perception of it.

We know that everything has a particular *individual* rate of molecular vibration; so that when one gazes *intently* at a glass button, for instance, the mind of that person is brought directly into contact with it and tends to take its form and characteristics; the brain, like the button, has a particular rate of molecular vibration; and by the forced concentration of the *mind* upon the object the vibrations of the brain are gradually brought into unison with it. We know that when the brain is modified by disease or otherwise, consciousness is disturbed; the mind can only function perfectly when it is in a normal state. So, when the brain is so greatly modified by being *forced* to vibrate in unison with an object, the mind gradually loses its hold, and the hypnotic state ensues; it is deep in proportion to the derangement of the vibration. Thus, only the physical, automatic man is left. The susceptibility to hypnosis evidently lies in our inability to control our own organism, our lack of concentration being so great that we find *extreme* difficulty in keeping our mind fixed, undeviatingly, upon an object for more than a very few moments. If any doubt this, let them test it for themselves. The phenomena exhibited in the hypnotic state I have briefly sketched earlier.

Now, let us take the magnetic or "mesmeric" state. I have given you Mesmer's theory of a universally extended "fluid," and it is this "fluid" that we make use of when we induce the magnetic sleep. Let us hear what Van Helmont has to say on "Magnetism":

"An occult influence exercised upon each other at distances, either by attractions or repulsions. * * * It is not a material substance, capable of being condensed, measured, weighed. It is a purely ethereal, vital spirit, or force, penetrating all bodies and

agitating the mass of the universe. It is the moderator of the world, because it establishes a correspondence between all its parts, and between all the forces, with which they are gifted. The light of the sun, the influence of the stars, the shocks communicated, etc., are spiritual agencies, or forces, that is, unlike material emanations, but like imperceptible light, traversing by radiation from one suitable object to another. * * * When the imagination is strongly excited, the soul engenders a real or an essential idea, which is not a sure quality, but an intermediate substance between the body and this spirit. When this idea has thus clothed a material substance and then an entity or specific existence, the intelligence recognizes it, the will attaches itself to it, and directs it, the memory recalls it. When this ideal entity spreads itself externally as vital spirit, it requires but a slight excitation to travel to a distance, and to execute the behests forced upon it by the will. Bodies are but half of the world; spirits are everywhere existent. Thus, spirits are the ministers of Magnetism—not the spirits of heaven and hell, but the spirits which are formed by man, and which are in him as the fire in the flint. The will of man divests itself of a portion of its vital spirit, which, uniting itself to the ideal entity, acquires an intermediary existence between what is material and that which is not, and spreads itself like light. The will sends forth and directs this substance, which once launched, like light, and not being material, is not arrested, either by distance or by time. This substance is not a demon, nor is it produced by the devil; it is an action of the spirit which belongs to our nature. The material world is ruled by the immaterial, and other bodies are in subjection to man."

Cornelius Agrippa says: "Influences only go forth through the help of the spirit; but this spirit is diffused through the whole Universe, and is in full accord with the human spirit."

Let us see how this vital energy or animal magnetism causes sleep. I take it for granted that every one here accepts the theory of an astral form as the centre of attraction for the molecules of the body and the medium of the vital force; for without this sleep cannot be explained. We know that under certain conditions the astral can be separated (apparently) from the physical form, but that in ordinary waking life they are in intimate connection and

interaction. The cells of the body exhibit, I believe, like everything else, the phenomena of polarity, and it is this polarity which in the waking state keeps the astral in connection with the physical form. Normal sleep is brought about by a change of polarity in the cells, caused by fatigue; or, to put it Theosophically, by an excess of the vital force.

"Sleep," says H. P. B., "is a sign that waking life has become too strong for the physical organism, and that the force of the life current must be broken by changing the waking for the sleeping state. Ask a good clairvoyant to describe the aura of a person just refreshed by sleep, and that of another person just before going to sleep. The former will be seen bathed in rhythmical vibrations of life currents—golden, blue, and rosy; these are the electrical waves of Life. The latter is, as it were, in a mist of intense golden-orange hue, composed of atoms whirling with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity, showing that the person begins to be too strongly saturated with Life; the life essence is too strong for his physical organs, and he must seek relief in the shadowy side of that essence, which side is the dream element, or physical sleep, one of the states of consciousness."

In a state of sleep the astral is almost disconnected from the outer body: this is supported by the well-known fact that the senses of sleeping persons do not readily respond to external stimulus; the vibrations impinge upon the organs in the usual way, but the sleeper rarely responds unless it produces a sudden shock upon the body, when the astral man is, by sympathy therewith, affected.

Now, the magnetic state is but an ordinary sleep artificially induced; instead of sleep resulting from an excess of his own personal magnetism, it results from the excess of another's. The ordinary mesmerist in producing the state brings the nervous system of his subject *en rapport* with his own by projecting his "auric," or nerve fluid (which is *not* magnetism) into the nervous system of his subject. And let us make another distinction here: the nerves and nerve-fluids are analogous to an electric telegraph; the nerve being the wire, and the "fluid" the electric force flowing thereon. This nerve-fluid is the vehicle of vital magnetism, or the medium through which it affects the body. You remember that portion of Mesmer's theory:

"The animal body experiences the alternative effects of this agent (animal magnetism), and is directly affected by its insinuation into the substance of the nerves."

"Properties are displayed, analogous to those of the magnet, particularly in the human body, in which diverse and opposite poles are likewise to be distinguished, and these may be communicated, changed, destroyed, and reinforced."

The magnetizer, by his will, and through the medium of the "auric," or nerve-fluid, saturates the subject with his own magnetism: this magnetism flows over the whole body and modifies, or completely changes, as the case may be, the polarity of the cells; this change of polarity, according to its extent, inhibits or cuts off the impressions which would otherwise pass from the physical to the astral form. Thus, the astral man is, to a greater or less extent, set free.

This state can be brought about by a peculiar regulation of the breath; this affects the life force (one of the manifestations of which is the drawing into the organism of the gases from the atmosphere) and modifies the polarity of the body. (A word of warning is, perhaps, necessary here: I should not advise anyone to *experiment* in this regulation of the breath, as the most probable result would be to make themselves ill.)

This theory of polarity accounts for the curative and anaesthetic action of magnetism. We can now see, without rushing to mystery, "spirits," or superstition, how it is possible to amputate a limb or extract a tooth without the patient losing consciousness; for if it is possible to alter the polarity of the cells of the *whole* body and thus prevent impressions being transmitted to the inner man, surely it is possible to alter the polarity of a portion of the body only?

HERBERT KITCHIN.

[To be continued.]

"A lie which is half a truth is ever the worst of lies."

—Tennyson.

"A firm-hearted man, improperly repulsed, is not abused.
Though the fire fall down the flame will not descend."

A THEOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION of PRAYER.

PRAYER is not *Word* alone; but it is also *Force*. "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" These are the words of Jesus himself on prayer, and they should, consequently, express the commonly accepted or orthodox Christian idea on the subject. However this may be, the great Master's words most assuredly do contain the Theosophical conception with regard to it. "God is a Spirit," and whether man as Theosophist, who sees in this spirit the source of his being, or as Christian, sees an extra-cosmic God (thereby casting a magnificent human shadow over cosmical space, in which he worships his own idealized image,)—whichever way it is, the thing is the same; for both Christian and Theosophist see always in *that* which they worship, spirit.

For the Theosophist this *Spirit* is the *Ideal*, and a true Theosophist devotes to it his daily work and his nightly dreams—that is to say, his whole being. In order to be able to worship spirit, what is required? Only like can comprehend like. "The eye would never be able to see the sun if it did not participate in its nature," said Plotinus. To be able to worship a spirit I must consequently have attained a certain degree of spirituality. Prayer, if it is real, and in earnest, becomes a constant effort to raise my soul to a higher and more spiritual sphere of consciousness than the one in which I usually dwell. And through this kind of prayer, which is not only *words*, but is *power* and *strength*, the Theosophist believes that it is possible to go from one stage of clearness to another; or, in other words, as the one veil after the other falls away which now hides from our view the noble countenance of the goddess Truth, we shall finally behold her as she really is, divested of all the dogmas and misrepresentations which have been piled around her by various religions. Then shall we be able to say with Jesus of Nazareth, "My Father and I are one," and this Father in secret is Atman, the impersonal spirit in the human being. The modern followers of Jesus may, perhaps, say that this sounds like presumption. The Christian, however, professes to believe that man is shaped in the image of God, but he does not attempt to understand the attributes naturally following on such an assertion,—which is the constant endeavor of the

Theosophist. We say that if this is true, then in the human being must exist a spiritual, as well as a physical nature; or rather, as Theosophy puts it, matter is condensed or crystallized spirit; and inasmuch as we have not the slightest doubt as to our materiality, so is the Theosophist equally without doubt that in the whole of nature dwells the spark of spirituality, which spark, in the human being, can be fanned into a conscious life if it is nourished daily with good and noble thoughts and actions, for it is this, and this only, that can elevate the human being into a spiritual and divine creature.

Prayer, consequently, for the Theosophist, means every possible effort towards providing a fit and pure atmosphere, and a suitable soil for this *spark*, or the appropriate life conditions necessary for its development. The Christian divides the human being into body, soul, and spirit, which division is also in agreement with Theosophy. If man is a three-fold being on this plane, he must, necessarily, be the same on the spiritual plane, inasmuch as matter is the reflection of spirit. Conformable with this conclusion, we presume to consider three kinds of spirituality—intellectual spirituality; psychic, or soul, spirituality; and spiritual spirituality. What, then, is the function of prayer in relation to this classification? Clearly it becomes the lever by which the human being gradually raises himself to these several grades of spiritual consciousness. Let us now observe what some of the obstacles are which stand in our way, for, according to what has been said, prayer must naturally be the force which should be effectual in overcoming these hindrances. Theosophy asserts that life is consciousness, and it further says that it is the desire to live that brings about reincarnation, consequently, then, it is this *desire* or *will* to become more and more spiritual and noble that is the real working force or power in the raising of a being from a lower to a higher state of consciousness. The will, then, seems to be the factor by the help of which we can reach the desired result; it is the regenerator through which we can attain to other conditions of consciousness and learn to acquire knowledge through other channels besides our, at present, often imperfect five senses. Experience is the source of all true wisdom, and through a devoted and sanctified will power do we become able to investigate all planes of nature.

Plotinus says "that prayer opens the eyes of the spiritual man, for prayer is desire, and desire is will"; and still further he says to us "that the magnetic emanations which flow from every effort of the body, whether psychic or physical, work self-magnetism or ecstasy. The want of spirituality in the humanity of the present day must, accordingly, be caused by either weakness or lack of will, or by impurity in their desires. Apollonius, for example, assures us that he acquired the capability of seeing the present and the future as in a clear looking-glass, and that he attained this faculty through asceticism, which is mentioned as not being the same as the self-mortification of the middle ages." Professor Wilder remarks with regard to this faculty of Apollonius, "that it is to be likened to spiritual photography." The soul is the camera in which events from the present, past, and future are fixed, the difficulty lies in the effort to make the soul aware of its capabilities. According to this definition, prayer, in its highest form, becomes will power, and it is this power alone that is effectual in bringing about ecstasy. And ecstasy endows the human being with a creative power which he can use upon whatever plane he chooses. Light is requisite for the production of a photograph. Prayer is the means by which the *spiritual light* is drawn forth, which shall enlighten the dark night of ignorance. *Prayer is Will.* Will power, like all else in nature, is of a three-fold activity. In its lowest aspect, the will is that power which induces the voluntary, as well as involuntary functions of the physical body, and has its center of activity in the spinal cord. In its higher aspect, it is the power which develops psychic activity; it is diffused through the blood which comes from the heart and returns to it, and its actions are governed, or can be governed, by intellect acting in the brain by means of the impulses or influences and auras radiating from there. In its highest aspect the *Will* is a *living and conscious power* having its *center* in the *heart*; but this kind of *Will* is only known to those who are illuminated by *Wisdom*."^{*}

Now, if the Will is of these three kinds, in order to be able to utter a right, proper prayer, a prayer which will work in Nature's higher planes, we require a sanctified Will, cleansed, or set free,

*From Magic, White and Black.

from all those elements which bind the Divine Ego, Son of God, down to Nature's lower planes. It is our unconquered selfishness that forges the chains which fetter and pollute this Ego, and only from the grave of our slain personal desires can the living will arise. May be this *Will* is the *Divine Fire* which Prometheus stole from heaven. According to the story, for this he was condemned to undergo the most terrible torture, or else to restore what he had stolen. It is said that each day a vulture gnawed out his liver, and during the night it grew afresh. The lower nature must be crucified daily with all its desires and lusts, and every time they attempt to rise up again they must be crushed to death until their voices are no longer heard. And then—when the pupil-disciple becomes indifferent to the impressions of the sense-world, when the soul has ceased to perceive the many voices, then, through the force of prayer, will he become sensible of the *One*, the *Inner Voice*. Even for Prometheus a day comes when free, and without struggle, he shall once more possess the stolen treasure. May we also, like this "Son of the Gods," through centuries of suffering and torment, make ourselves worthy to possess our higher inheritance! We know the way and the means to attain to this; we possess it in the *Will*, in a strong, and intensely devoted desire to raise ourselves from the plane upon which we now live to higher spheres of consciousness. According to this conception of prayer, it becomes an injunction—nay more, a command.

Possibly it is here that the greatest difference is to be remarked between the Theosophist and the orthodox Christian in the methods they use for prayer or invocation; the latter expresses his soul's desire in the form of a petition for pardon, and the former depends upon his divine nature, and his prayer becomes, therefore, only an effort to unite himself to his higher Self. However, in spite of the different conceptions, may we always remember that every earnest wish to raise ourselves and our fellow-creatures is a true prayer, independent of whether the petitioner calls himself Christian, Mohammedan, or Theosophist! May such prayer never strike us as childish or ignorant, whether it be offered to the suppliant's Higher Self, to Jesus Christ, or some other great Master, and an earnest supplication will always, by reason

of its own innate power, gain a hearing. "Had you faith even as a grain of mustard you could remove mountains," said Jesus of Nazareth. But whatever belief a person may have, if he prays only with the lips, and the heart is not in it, his prayer remains unanswered.

Victor Rydberg says :

"Prayer with uplifted hands is not enough.
Toiler, when thou prayest for the earth's harvest,
Pray, but with thy hand upon the plough,
And then the *God of Prayer* will bless thy harvest."

Prayer is the means by which we gather strength, and as we receive this power, we must ourselves make use of it, if we wish to attain our end. An effectual prayer is, consequently, force ; but we are also aware that a force is something impersonal, which, for the most part, can be used in different ways. Nearly every force in nature has its dark and its light side ; the one brings blessing, and the other a curse. If, then, prayer is such a force, we can easily perceive that not only can a good, but even an evil desire exercise its potency, if it is strong enough ; but it is only the good desire that works in *harmony* with nature, and can explore all the planes of nature; only the pure can be harmonious. The evil desire, or will, which is at war with nature, will meet, sooner or later, with all the evil forces that it has set in motion.

Through what has been already said, I have sought to show what we can attain for ourselves by prayer, in the Theosophical meaning of the word ; but now, as the Theosophist's first duty is especially brotherly love, I will endeavor to show what assistance we can render our brothers thereby.

"The desire of the pure in heart," says a prominent Theosophist, "possesses the faculty of penetrating or forcing its way into other natures, just as water runs easily from a higher into a lower vessel. The natural power of the purified Will can no more be hindered in its work than any other natural force. The purified Will acts, consequently, as an incentive to good, and becomes a shelter for weaker natures. Several times in this short essay the words, 'different planes of consciousness,' have been mentioned. Many will ask, "What does the Theosophist mean by this, 'that we live on different planes?'" Theosophy teaches that man is a physi-

cal, an astral, an intellectual and a spiritual monad, and possesses, accordingly, within himself the possibility of using his consciousness on whichever plane he chooses, provided he is such; but if this possibility is to become a certainty, then his whole life must be one continued prayer. Hartman says, in "Magic White and Black": "To recognize the purity of the divine spark within, is true adoration; to attempt to realize it is true meditation; to exert the Will to bring one's self in perfect harmony with it, is aspiration or prayer. To express that prayer in action is to make it effective. True prayer is always efficacious on the plane whereon it is made to act. Prayer on the physical plane consists in physical works, on the astral plane it purifies the emotions through the action of the Will; in the realm of the intellect, study is prayer, and leads to knowledge, and the highest spiritual aspirations, it lifts man out of the turmoil of matter, and brings him nearer to his own God. True prayer does not consist in words, but in actions, and the Gods help him who helps himself; but he who expects that the Gods should do for him that which he ought to accomplish himself, does not know how to pray, and will be disappointed. Prayer means a rising up in our thoughts and aspirations to our highest ideal, but if we do not ourselves rise up to it we do not pray. If we expect our highest ideal to come down to us, we expect an absurdity, an impossibility." This expectation, that the ideal shall come down to us, seems to me to be the orthodox Christian comprehension of the purpose of prayer. And it is here that the essential difference lies between the conceptions of the Theosophist and Christian on prayer.

With these few words I have tried to put before you the Theosophical meaning with regard to prayer, and what we can gain for ourselves and our fellow-creatures by a right use of it. May our love for one another be strong enough to give us courage to defy all evil powers, so that if we are once in possession of a *purified Will*, we may become the benefactors of those around us. May we never set ourselves up as patterns, nor talk loudly of ethics with a puffed-up or elated pride in our hearts, but let us rather, with all humility, seek to transform our whole lives into a prayer, a spiritual endeavor to benefit our fellow creatures, and to raise ourselves. If this is to succeed, then the physical man must

first be made more ethereal and receptive, the intellectual more clear-sighted and deep-thinking, and the moral more self-sacrificing and philosophical. The Theosophical prayer has before it a wide field of activity, it has many heroic deeds to perform ; but actions achieved will place us in a position to draw from the fount of wisdom, for through the creative force of prayer, truth will become self-conscious in us, and we shall become *one* with it, each one of us will thus be a true Christ, and with the great Master, Jesus Christ, will be able to say, "It is finished."

FRIDA VON BETZEN.

Translated from the Swedish by M. Haig.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

THE mystery of consciousness is the mystery of the soul, of life. In man this mystery of mysteries is seven-fold. This consciousness of ours extends through seven spheres, each divided and subdivided into many regions. Yet people in general content themselves with the limited sphere of material consciousness. It is the duty of every F. T. S. to apply himself to this problem of consciousness, gathering together facts, collecting the wisdom of others, working out the laws or processes, and, above all, studying his own consciousness. In this study one axiom must ever be borne in mind; viz.: that Genius notes the *little things*. In occult science the clews to discoveries are imperceptible save to the watchful eye. One must search always and know what to search for.

The October MERCURY gave (over the initials of E. M. C.) a peculiar and vivid experience of consciousness separate and apart from the physical form. The experience came without any effort being made at concentration.

The editor of "Behind the Veil" has pondered over this phase of consciousness till, at last, armed with a note book, he went among his limited circle and asked the question:

"Have you ever known yourself to be apart from your body, and under what conditions?"

This interrogatory elicited the following peculiar facts:

ODD PHASES OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF X.

"All my life, until my acceptance of Theosophy, I was subject to sensations of unreality and of being out of my physical form.

"The first in my remembrance occurred when I was eleven years of age. While playing rather a noisy game with another child, suddenly the child, the room, the furniture became unreal and I seemed standing outside in space, looking on at their motions as at a dream. The awful sensation engraved itself upon my mind.

"Often after that the same eerie unreality would enfold my surroundings. The I that felt was never unreal. Sometimes I made frantic efforts to hold to normal consciousness and then the two phases became very distinct to my inner perception. The sensations never lasted long, but they left a sense of unreality that remained several hours, during which time I would pinch myself, strike the tables, etc., to assure myself that they were all solid. These experiences generally came when I was in the midst of amusement. One never-to-be-forgotten time, while resting after a dance at a very lively party, the music, the gay crowd, my body, everything, became like dream phantasms, and I, a conscious point in space, the only real thing there, looked on sadly.

"Fortunately, I was endowed with remarkable self-control, and as I looked upon these sensations as related to insanity I was able to keep my secret. Then there came a climax. A friend lent me "Esoteric Buddhism." The reading of that book was an event in my life; it awoke a forgotten something within my mind, and soon I found my thinking self entirely apart from my body. There was no horror this time, no unreality; only a distinct duality—the thinking self and the physical instrument. It was holiday time, and I paid a visit to some friends in the country. The sense of duality continued. My body seemed so slow to obey the orders of the thinking self. 'Speak quicker, *thing*,' I would cry out in my thought, 'lest people see that you are not I.' There was always a space of some three feet between my two selves.

"But fear lest my condition should be discovered grew upon

me until it became intolerable. At last, collecting all my forces, I willed that the condition should cease, and it did cease. There was no pain; I do not remember entering my body; simply the conscious perception of duality left me not to return."

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

THIS DEPARTMENT IS INTENDED TO BE ONE OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE. ANY ITEMS SHOWING THE AID THEOSOPHY GIVES IN DAILY LIFE WILL BE WELCOME.

"HOW HAS THEOSOPHY HELPED YOU?"

Theosophy has been to me a key to the Bible, showing me the *esoteric* meaning of that most contradictory book—comprising fifty-six books in all—which used to puzzle me sorely. It has made me realize that "there is but one God," the Christ within, the "great Master," the *Higher Self*, that no one can stand before a higher tribunal than this "Master" of mind who stands in judgment over every thought, word, and act. It is a well—this "inner God"—of the purest, sweetest water, "a spring of living water," always brimful, always strengthening, a spring that never runs dry except we so choose ourselves. It teaches self-mastery—crushing of self. It shows how puny we are, how vain and selfish are our self-esteem, ambitions, etc. From my own experience I would say no one can in earnest study Theosophy without becoming a better man, a better woman, becoming more tolerant, broader of view, and more charitable because one realizes that "only thyself, thyself can harm," and thus as you sow, so also must you reap. Theosophy brings peace, comfort, light, and joy to the eager, yearning, searching soul. It has brought it to me in the midst of turbulent forces.

L. THOMAS.

WHAT THEOSOPHY HAS DONE FOR ME.

Abandoning the orthodox church on account of its irrationality, I was thrown to the other extreme of cold materialism. Then Theosophy came to me as a light showing out of darkness. Its scientific intellectualism made the universe seem possible and its heart doctrine showed the *all* to be harmonious, progressive and lovable. Hope takes Despair's place. Love banishes Hate. The way is prepared for every day holiness, built not alone on sentiment.

and emotion, but on practical accessible truths in nature, unfolding the full man, and bringing him into conscious rapport with the divine in nature.

W. C. B. RANDOLPH.

AROUND THE ZODIAC.

HE 20th of January the Sun enters the Zodiacal sign Aquarius—the “Water Bearer.” This sign is the home of Uranus the planet of occult force.

In the body Aquarius rules the legs. The second step after the turning point (Capricorn) is to give forth to the world of one's gift. A proverb says that “The rain comes from above.” The Water Bearer lets fall the rain upon the earth, that it may bring forth flower or fruit. Whether that rain be gentle, pure and all-penetrating or a foul all-destroying torrent depends upon the one from whom that rain cometh. Hence Aquarius symbolizes the White and the Black Magician—the benefactor or the enslaver of his race. Its gem is the sky-blue sapphire. Spike-nard, myrrh and incense-producing plants are consecrated to it. Under its rule are the black pearl and obsidian.

The world is what we see it,—abounding in misery and wickedness. If you believe in a moral governor, you are bound to put extraordinary limitations upon his power to vindicate his benevolence, or to limit his benevolence in order to vindicate his power; and, in either case, you take away with the one hand that safeguards “morality which you give with the other.

—Leslie Stephen.

Purity of body comes by water; purity of mind by truthfulness. What is truth? It is the speaking of words that are without the least degree of evil to others.

Look within. The fountain of good is there; and it will flow forever if thou wilt forever dig.

—Marcus Aurelius Autoninus.

Each of the many-colored flowers blooming in the garden of the earth is a drop of blood from the heart of a man.

—Persian.

T. S. ECHOES.

TORONTO, CANADA.—The monthly meeting of Toronto T. S., December 20th, was addressed by Dr. Emily H. Storve; subject, "Mental Science." Dr. Storve is President of the "Woman's Enfranchising Association" for the Dominion of Canada, and one of the most prominent advocates of advanced thought in our city. Her paper was followed by an exposition of Theosophic teachings upon the mind by one of our members. Our Hall was well filled and great interest manifested by the audience, in both Dr. Storve's address and that which followed it. Our two leading morning dailies, the "Globe" and the "Mail-Empire", each gave a half-column report of the meeting. On the last Friday of this month, two of the members of the Astronomical Society, of this city, will give us a popular talk on Astronomy, illustrated. In the future the meetings for Branch members will be held on the first Friday of each month and will be made of a more social nature than heretofore, members being asked to invite their friends and acquaintances. The last Friday of each month will be devoted to a public meeting, to be addressed by some prominent speaker, not a member of the T. S., on some interesting subject, followed by a talk by one of our members, applying Theosophy to the subject of the address. Sunday evenings will, as usual, be devoted to public meetings, addressed by members, on the International Series of Sunday School lessons. A class for the study of the Secret Doctrine has been formed, and will meet every Wednesday evening.

Fraternally,

F. E. TITUS.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND., Nov. 26.—During the past month the following public efforts have been made by members of the local Branch to extend a knowledge of Theosophy. On November 1st, S. Stuart delivered before the open Lodge meeting, an address upon "The Source of All Knowledge"; on Nov. 8th a series of short papers as answers to questions on the Secret Doctrine, were read by C. W. Sanders, Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Davy and Mrs. Evitt. On Sunday evening, Nov. 10th, W. H. Draffin lectured on "Modern Failings"; on Nov. 15th, a series of short papers were read by C. W. Sanders, S. E. Hughes, Mrs. Evitt and S. Stuart, as answers to questions on the Secret Doctrine; on Nov. 22d, W. H. Draffin, at the open Lodge meeting, gave an address on "The Cosmopolitan Character of Theosophy"; on Nov. 24th, Sunday evening, Miss L. Edge, M. A., lectured on "Theosophy in Every Day Life", to a good audience.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.—Harmony Lodge is now reading Mr. Leadbeater's excellent book, "The Astral Plane". Eager students of life's problems are finding much food for thought and soul growth at our meetings. Lately we sent out letters to all known loyal members in this vicinity,

encouraging unity of thought and work for the American Section T. S. Good theosophic literature, especially cheap, short explanations of its principles, is in demand. We are trying, in a small way, to meet it. Several new members, valuable acquisitions, are to be reported.

W. C. B. RANDOLPH, Sec'y.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.—Mr. N. F. de Clifford has recovered from his recent sickness and is now at Santa Ana, Orange Co., working for the cause with his usual enthusiasm and ability. The Santa Ana "Evening Blade" says "Mr. de Clifford is a charming, easy speaker." Evidently Mr. de C. has struck the right chord in Santa Ana, as will be seen by the following letter taken from the Santa Ana "Evening Blade," of January 3d, 1896 :

MR. N. F. DE CLIFFORD—Dear Sir: We, the undersigned, have enjoyed your informal talks about the Oriental countries, the people, their manners and customs, etc., in such a degree that we should be delighted to spend an entire evening with you in learning of your extensive travels; therefore, could you, before your departure from our city, make it convenient to lecture in some hall where we could bring our families and the public in general could have an opportunity to enjoy the rich treat in store for all who are anxious to hear a traveler speak from his own experience of the things seen in the strange countries of the far East? If you can do so, please announce date and place and we shall do all in our power to make the lecture profitable to you.

Believe us, dear sir, to be yours truly.

The signatures to this letter number twenty-five and include the prominent business men of Santa Ana. That is a good way to bring the Wisdom of the East to the busy West. Success to the worker.

CHICAGO BRANCH T. S. is quite alive, notwithstanding reports to the contrary, which have recently been circulated. A Secret Doctrine class meets at 7:15 on Wednesdays, and at 8:15 the Branch meets in regular session. A paper is presented by some one upon a topic announced in the printed "Syllabus of Discussions" and a discussion follows, participated in by members and non-members. The topics of the lectures given on Sunday evenings during the month have been "The Philosophy of the Upanishads"; "Symbolism"; "The Birth of Jesus" and "The Awakening and Development of the Spiritual Nature."

NETTA E. WEEKS, Sec.

English Letter.

Dear Editor:—Activities of various kinds have taken place this month. Mrs. Besant gave her final public lectures in Queen's Hall, Langham Place, entitled "The Higher Bodies," and "The Man." On Dec. 5th, she lectured on "Responsibility" at the Blavatsky Lodge, and the following evening, Dec. 6th, started for India. Many members col-

lected at the station to say a last good-bye. We hope to have her with us again in April next.

The first series of "Old Diary Leaves," by the President Founder, was published a few weeks ago, and the sale has been all that could be desired, showing that public interest in Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society is in no way diminished by the recent attacks.

The French Branch of the Theosophical Society has sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. Arthur Arnould. He was President of the Paris Lodge and editor of the *Lotus Bleu*. Mr. Arnould has been for many years a devoted worker, and during the past year stood loyally by the Parent Society. Another old member, the Duchess de Pomar has also passed away. Mrs Besant lectured at her house the last time she visited Paris. The President Founder also saw her in September last.

I hope shortly to be able to record the formation of another Lodge in France. The Toulon Centre, which has for some time been working steadily under D. Pascal, is now increasing in its activity. Theosophical literature is selling well, and the chief daily papers having inserted several articles by D. Pascal, much interest has been aroused in Theosophy.

Mr. Mead has finished the translation of the *Pistis Sophia*, and it will shortly be published. He has now begun a translation of some of the *Upanishads*, which he intends publishing in sixpenny volumes. Mr. Mead has been emboldened to make this attempt, owing to the great success which has attended the sale of the cheap edition of the *Bhagavad Gita*, of which a new edition of five thousand is now being printed; all the first edition having been sold. It has been clearly proven that the Indian teachings only have to be known to be appreciated, but, hitherto, the price charged for the Eastern books has been far beyond the means of the majority of people.

Members will also be glad to know that the difficulty regarding the copyright of *Light on the Path* has been settled once for all, and copies, with the Comments included, will, in the future, be procurable at the Theosophical Publishing Society, 7 Duke Street, London.

I finish with best greetings to all for the coming New Year.

L. M. COOPER.

Honor to the true man ever, who takes his life in his hands, and, at all hazards, speaks the word which is given to him to utter, whether men will bear or forbear; whether the end thereof is to be praise or censure, gratitude or hatred.

—Whittier

All good men teach, preach and practice morality; therefore, morality is not peculiar to Christianity.

BOOK REVIEWS.

“LUCIFER.”—In the “Watch Tower” Mrs. Besant announces her near departure to India. She promises to contribute an article every month during her absence. She notes an excellent method for the conducting of Spiritualistic seances, an interesting discovery in photography (which we will give in next number). The discussion concerning Mars and Mercury is finally disposed of. “The facts are these: The planetary chain consists of globes A., B., Mars, Earth, Mercury, F. and G., and round these the great life-wave has swept three times and a half, reaching Earth for the fourth time; the mass of humanity passed from Mars to the Earth and so on. But the leading class of humanity came directly from another region at a much later period of evolution, and had never been on Mars.” “Dreams” is concluded. We hope this valuable article will be printed in convenient form. “Early Christianity and Its Teachings” proves that, although ideas of pre-existence were held by individuals, yet reincarnation was not accepted. Orpheus grows more and more fascinating to the student of ancient myth. “Man’s Place and Function in Nature,” by Annie Besant, vividly portrays man’s cruelty to animals. “Theosophy Among the Quietists” is concluded. It brings the soul to the Silent place, where alone God is found. “The Unpublished Letters of Eliphas Levi,” are also concluded. Its issue in book form would be a valuable addition to our Occult Library.

“THE VAHAN” for December has a letter from Mrs. Besant advocating the establishment of circulating libraries. She says. “There is no better Theosophical propaganda than that carried on by the circulating of books.” Enquirer discusses the relation of “Purgatory to Kama Loka and Hades”; “Dreams, Their Influence and Control”; and “The Difference Between Eastern and Western Occultism,” from which we quote the following: “We are indebted for the present impulse towards occult research to the light which has come to us from the East; but it seems to me that the loftiest conception we can form of the great Masters of Wisdom, who have inspired this, and so many other spiritual activities, at various periods of the world’s progress, is that which entangles them with no ethnological limitations but regards them pre-eminently as the Elder Brothers of mankind.”

“NOTES AND QUERIES” is full of rare and valuable matter. We note an exhaustive article on “Prophetism in Israel,” by Ernest de Brunnen. A comparative statement of six great theories of the revolution of our Sun around *its* central Sun, and a perfect Magic Square for 1896.

"ENGLISH THEOSOPHIST," for October, has an article on "The Christ Within." It suggests a Pan-theosophical Congress to be held at fixed periods of about four years.

THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA.—The "Outlook" is excellent reading. The Lotus Lesson is good for grown-ups as well as for children. It begins, "I want you to do more than speak truthfully; I want you to think truthfully."

"THE BRAHMavadin."—Published weekly at Madras. First issue Sept. 14, 1895. "The main object of the journal is to propagate the principles of the Vedantic Religion of India. * * * The power of any ideal * is dependent on how high and pure it is: it shall be the endeavor of the "Brahmavadin" to portray the Hindu ideal in the best and truest light." The four numbers at hand fully sustain this high purpose.

"THE ANTAHKARANA" continues Mrs. Besant's lecture on India, and the translation of the Gita. It announces the publication of the Hitopadesra, trans-ated by Dr. D. Jose Alemany, of the University of Granada.

"SEEN AND THE UNSEEN," a new journal published at Brisbane, is a very laudable effort to present the truth in all the advanced thought of to-day and yesterday. The first number gives many profound ideas in a bright, readable way. Theosophy, Spiritualism and Astrology are specially treated. Countess Wachtmeister, in the introductory letter, says: "This paper will be dedicated to the uplifting of humanity and the introducing of all those ideas which tend to improve the human race and promote the feeling of Brotherhood. We wish the journal every success.

Received—"THE LAMP," "THEOSOPHIC GLEANER," "ATMA'S MESSENGER."

The society for psychic investigation lately established in this city has been holding most successful meetings.

The members of the Society, who number some of the leading business and professional men in San Francisco, have engaged very able and popular speakers—Prof. Jordan of Stanford; Prof. Le Conte; Mr. Morse of London, and others.

The popularity of the movement and the crowds attracted to the meetings attest to the growth of spiritual ideas among people at large. Thus the leaven works.

If you want knowledge, you must toil for it; if food, you must toil for it, and if pleasure, you must toil for it. Toil is the law. When one gets to love work, his life is a happy one.

—John Ruskin.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

A FAIRY TALE.

IT WAS an autumn sunset. The flushed and tired sun was going to rest behind the sea, which murmured a lullaby for his repose, whilst the clouds drew their dark red curtains round his couch, and his fair child, Venus, who follows him wherever he goes, held up her small candle to take the place of her father's torch, until Diana appeared with her lantern, when she, too, wrapped herself in a cloud and went to sleep.

"How lovely it is up there!" exclaimed a young water-spirit, "and how grand it must be to be one of those clouds, dressed always in white, except when the sun, to show how he loves them, clothes them in gold and crimson and purple, or the moon gives them a dark rich robe with a fringe of silver and jewels. I *should* like to be a cloud!"

And with a sigh he dropped his head on his breast and listened to the distant hum of the voices of his brother-spirits in the sea, who were shouting and singing, moaning and wailing, wrestling and running, turning summer-saults and fighting, carrying off coral, pearls and precious stones, building up and pulling down, in utter oblivion of clouds, stars and moonshine.

"*They* don't care to be clouds," said the self-sufficient young sprite. "It is only one or two choice spirits like myself whose ambition can soar so high. I will leave this sordid multitude with its tawdry pearls and its vulgar noise, and find my way up alone into the quiet of the heaven, from whence I can look down upon them in that white dress that will suit me so well."

So saying, he darted a look of unutterable contempt at a fat young turbot who was glaring at him with open eyes and mouth, wondering if he was a suitable subject for gastronomical operations, and darted into the estuary of a large river which opened out just opposite to him.

For several days he swam on, and had the satisfaction of finding himself already higher up, though it became very hard work swimming against the stream. "This river," he said, "that is al-

ways coming down and down, *must* come from the clouds; and so, if I follow it up and up, I shall get there in time." And so he went on and on; when the river divided he took the branch that seemed to lead highest. But he got on very slowly after the first spurt, and was many times nearly disheartened. One day, two or three months after he had started, the stream, which had grown much smaller and also much quicker, suddenly widened out into a large sheet of water.

"What is this?" he cried. "Have I come to another sea? No there are no waves here, or only very little ones; why, I must have reached the place I wanted! and if I haven't it is quite as good. I'll rest here awhile because I'm very tired." So he went to sleep. But alas! A wicked enchanter was prowling about—a magician who goes by the terrible name of Jack Frost. He no sooner saw that our young friend was asleep on his own grounds than he pounced upon him and bound him fast with cold hard fetters, and kept him there for several weeks without a sight of sun, moon, or stars; and if it had not been for the good and thoughtful Sun, he would have kept him there forever. But the Sun loved the water-spirit, though he *was* such a foolish young imp, and melted Jack Frost's chains with his fire when he thought that the magician had punished him long enough.

Then the water-spirit pursued his search with redoubled energy seeing that if he stood still and did nothing he would never get to be a cloud, which was certainly something worth learning. So, to cut my story short, he at last arrived at the source of the stream, and when he saw that after all it came from the earth, he flung himself down and wept. When his sobs had subsided, and he was lying down in the sulks, he heard a sweet voice singing to the rippling accompaniment of the water. And this is what it sang:

"In a cloud I was born,
At the break of the morn,
And the golden-hued robe of the sun I have worn.

"Soon after my birth
I dropped to the earth,
And the green fields rejoiced with thanksgiving and mirth.

"And downward I fly,
Till the sun is on high,
To draw me again to my home in the sky."

The water-spirit raised his head and looked around, but could see nothing. He thought he heard the last notes of the song die away behind him, so he turned round and darted back down the stream. Sure enough, there was a white shape gliding down the stream before him. He managed to overtake it by dint of great effort, and all breathless panted out:

"Who are you?"

"I am a cloud-spirit," answered the other, who was as white as snow and as clear as the water.

"Then will you tell me how I can get to be a cloud?"

"Why do you want to be a cloud?" queried the cloud-spirit in return.

"That I may wear a pretty white dress and be admired from below; and that I may be carried in the arms of the wind and play at hide-and-seek with the stars."

"Then you never will be a cloud, as long as those are your ideas," said the cloud-spirit emphatically, as they swam onward and downward.

"Why?"

"Because the sun only makes clouds of those who will do as he wants them to do."

"And what does he want them to do?"

"To make themselves of use by watering the earth. Besides, my friend, excuse me, your dress is dirty, and you are covered with salt. You must throw away that brown cloak and get rid of that salt before the sun will have anything to do with you."

"And how can I do that?"

"Go back to where you came from. Go into the sea again, but go right in; don't play about on the beach. Live in the light of the sun, and you will grow more like the light, clear and transparent. Be content there; do all you have to do faithfully and well; make it your aim above all others to be of service, and then you will—but there is the sun—good-bye!"

"But what about the salt? Stop! stop!"

It was no use; there was nothing to be seen except a white vapor floating away into the sky.

The disconsolate water-spirit let the river carry him back to the sea, and all the way there he thought and thought. And the

result of his thinking was that he did as the cloud-spirit had told him to do; he went right away into the middle blue of the sea. He helped to make the waves, he threw back the glory of the sun and stars. It was all he could do, and he did it.

And one morning, when the sun rose up in a cloudless sky, he crept to the top of the sea and asked the sun to make him of more use. And instantly the power was given him to throw off his burden of salt and rise above the waves, a white spirit. And the sun sent his servant, the wind, to bring him nearer to himself, and the wind carried him over sea and land with a song of rejoicing. But when the sun clothed him in purple and gold, he looked down at his poor commonplace, struggling brethren—looked down and loved them more than ever; and dropping tears, precious as diamonds, hastened away to his work.

H. E. NICHOL.

AIDS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN DECEMBER NUMBER

16.—Plants grow when the life force within them is quickened by the life-force from without. Plants eat sunshine and air, especially the carbonic gas held in the air, and they drink water and turn the sunshine, air and water and the earth elements held in the water into fibre, leaf blossom and fruit.

17.—Stars are suns, and suns are centers of force that become light, heat, electricity, life.

18.—We breathe to take in air-food and sun-life so that the fire-life within us may be kept pure, bright and strong. Stars breathe, worlds breathe, plants and animals breathe, for they are all forms of the Great Breath.

19.—Certainly, children should say or think prayers at least twice a day. Children of all sizes from two feet to six feet, for each one is a ray of the Higher Self; each one a child of the Divine Father-Mother within, yet who are in heaven, who are power, love, wisdom. A few minutes, morning and night, spent in acknowledging this Divine parentage, in trying to come close to Its holiness, in invoking Its aid in the daily struggle with selfishness will do much towards making us pure, loving and faithful.

NEW QUESTIONS.

20.—Is it necessary for a man to be intellectually developed in order to comprehend spiritual truths?

21.—What is the distinction between a Black and White Magician?

22.—What is Fire?

23.—When did man first appear on this earth?